

Remarks to the Community in Denver July 22, 1996

Thank you. Ladies and gentlemen, thank you for that wonderful welcome. Thank you, Mayor Webb, for your leadership and for your extraordinarily powerful personal statement. Thank you, Governor Romer, for being my friend for such a long time now and for being a shining example of the best in public service. Thank you all for keeping him on the job.

Ladies and gentlemen, before I begin my remarks today, I'd like to say just a word about an issue that I believe is on the minds and hearts of all Americans, the ongoing recovery operations involving TWA Flight 800. This is a very long and difficult period for the families and loved ones of the people who were on that plane. It is literally an agonizing process, made worse by the fact that the weather has been so poor and that many of the things that would have been done by now have not been able to be done.

I want the families to know that I am working as hard as I can to speed this process and to make it as easy as possible. I've asked the relevant Federal agencies to provide pathologists to the recovery teams in New York if they're requested by the State. And we are working very, very hard to get to the bottom of this. We will do that, and we will give them the answers they seek as soon as we possibly can.

Meanwhile, I ask the rest of you to keep them in your prayers. It is this awful hanging fire that is the difficult and agonizing thing for them. We can all imagine how we would feel if we were in their place. And so I ask you to keep them in your prayers, and I assure you that we will do everything we can to get to the bottom of this as quickly as possible.

Let me say I have come here to Denver today, as the Governor and the mayor said, to discuss the issue of welfare reform and specifically to talk a little bit about the child support issue. But I want to put it into a larger context of where we are as a people, why this is important, and what we're trying to do together to get ready to march into that new century just 4 years away.

Denver's a good place to do this. This is a city that believes in itself and in the future, and America needs to believe in itself and in

its future. Denver is clearly getting ready for a new century only 4 years away. I arrived last night at your new airport, the first one of its size in 20 years. I now am speaking in this incredible arts complex, the second biggest in America, looking at this wonderful auditorium that is lined with sandstone that I'm told was hewn right out of the beautiful mountains that are just beyond these walls. This is a large-minded place. And America needs to be large-minded as we stand on the threshold of this new century.

Because the information age is so dramatically changing the way we work, the way we live, the way we relate to each other and the rest of the world, the next generation of Americans is literally going to have more opportunities to live out their dreams than any generation of Americans in history. The young people that are in this audience today, within a matter of 10 years, will be doing jobs that have not even been invented yet. Some of them have not been conceived yet.

So this is going to be a very exciting time, full of enormous possibility. But as is inevitable in the human condition, it will also have some very stiff challenges. We know that the very things that make the world more exciting, more open—the rapid movement of information and ideas and capital and technology and people from community to community, from State to State, from nation to nation—all that openness and speed that brings so many new opportunities also impose new challenges on us that are economic, that are social, that deal with our very essence of security.

We know, for example, that there are more economic opportunities, but the people without the education to take advantage of them may be left behind. And so, the very prosperity that is coming to our country, if we don't work very hard at it, can increase inequality among working families, not just poor families on welfare.

We know, for example, that this great mobility that we have and all the choices we have as consumers and our ability to stay before a computer or a cable television for hours on end may isolate us one from another and further strain the fragile bonds of community. We know

that if people have too many individual choices, they may neglect their responsibilities to others and to the community at large.

We know that the more open our society is to good things moving around, the more vulnerable we become to the organized forces of destruction. We know that you can get on the Internet, for example, and if you know how to plug in you can learn how to make a bomb like the one that destroyed the Federal building in Oklahoma City.

So the trick for us is to meet the challenges of this new age and protect the values that have sustained America through more than 200 years of life. That is the way to make the future the best time for America.

When I sought this job, I had a simple vision for what I wanted America to do as we stand on the threshold of this new century. I wanted us to make sure that the American dream was alive for everybody who was willing to work for it without regard to their race, their gender, their background, their station in life. I wanted this to be a country that was coming together, not being divided by racial and ethnic and religious forces that are tearing the world apart in other places on the globe. And I wanted our country to continue to be the world's leader for peace and prosperity, for security and for freedom.

Yes, the cold war is over and we are trying to complete its unfinished business of reducing the nuclear threat and reconciling ourselves to former Communist countries. But we must recognize that there are new security threats, and we must recognize that there are continuing responsibilities on the United States if we want our children to have a safe world to live in.

Now, to me there is a simple formula that I try to keep in mind every day about how we ought to approach this. We need to create opportunity for all Americans; we need to insist on responsibility from all Americans; and we need to do everything we can to create a greater sense of community in this country, a sense that we're all in this together.

Today I want to talk mostly about responsibility, but let me just mention a few things about the other issues. This issue of community could hardly be more important. I worked so hard to get the Congress to create the national service program, AmeriCorps, to give now 45,000 people, by the end of this year as many as 60,000 young people, the chance to serve in their communities, meeting challenges in

their communities and earning some money to go to college, and opening that program to people right across the income spectrum because I wanted a symbol of the way we ought to work together. I wanted it to stand as sort of a cross between a domestic Peace Corps and a domestic GI bill, so that we could pull people together and move forward together into the future.

We worked very hard to help people in our country deal with racial differences. I tried to take the affirmative action issue, for example, out of politics and into real life, and say we ought to mend it but not end it as long as we have continuing discrimination in our country.

We've tried to find a way to help people with profound religious convictions express those convictions even in public forums without violating the first amendment. We've worked especially hard with our schools on that issue, trying to reconcile the differences between us so that we can respect our diversity and grow stronger because of it.

If you look around in this room today and you see all the different backgrounds from which we come, if you watch the Olympics and you look at the American team, depending on what sport and what athlete, you could think you were watching someone from Europe, from Scandinavia, from the Middle East, from Africa, from Latin America, from Asia. They could all be on America's team because we are not a one-race nation. We're a nation bound together by shared ideals and shared values and shared convictions.

So whether it's abroad in trying to help deal with the ethnic problems in Bosnia or the religious problems in Northern Ireland or the difficult problems in the Middle East, to the tribal butchery in Rwanda where our people went and saved so many lives, we tried to live our sense of community and our conviction about it.

We've also tried to help parents and working people deal with what I think is one of the most significant challenges to preserving the American community in America today—and that gets me into the other two issues—and that is the inherent tension that so many people feel between work and family, especially in this economy.

The truth is that the average working family is now spending more hours at work and less hours at home, fewer hours at home, than 25

years ago, a stunning statistic. So much for the proposition that there are a lot of lazy Americans.

But what we want is to be able to succeed at home and at work. And what we want is to understand that our most important job is raising our children, but we also have to do a good job at the other work of America so that we can create opportunity for people, to give them the opportunity to raise their children and have their lives and live out their destinies.

And reconciling those two things has been very difficult indeed. That's why I fought so hard for the Family and Medical Leave Act. That's why I fought to give families some tools they might need to help their childrearing efforts in the V-chip and challenging the entertainment industry to rate television programs and trying to stop television advertising or—excuse me—trying to stop advertising across the board from being aimed at children to get them to buy tobacco products, which is illegal and the biggest public health problem in the country.

If you look at the problem of community in a microcosm as the problems of families in neighborhoods trying to succeed at home and succeed at work, it leads you to the other two issues, opportunity and responsibility. The first responsibility of Government, after providing for the security of the country, is to try to create an environment in which people have the ability to succeed and then give people the tools they need to succeed, so that when I became President we had to, first of all, get our economic house in order. We had, 4 years ago, the slowest job growth since the Great Depression. We had a very stagnant economy; unemployment was nearly 8 percent. We had quadrupled the debt in 4 years. The deficit was at \$290 billion a year and going higher.

And so we, first of all, said, look, we have to turn this around. And we had a simple strategy: Get the deficit down to get interest rates down, so people would invest in America; expand trade to sell more American products; and invest in the basic things that Americans need to succeed.

Now, 3½ years later, the deficit has been cut from \$290 billion—this year it's projected to be \$117 billion—more than a 60 percent cut in 4 years. This is the first administration in which the deficit's been cut in all 4 years since the 1840's. And I'm proud of that.

The interest rates dropped. The economy produced 10 million jobs, over 300,000 here in Colorado. The unemployment rate has dropped, and the combined rates of unemployment, inflation, and home mortgages is at the lowest they've been in almost 30 years. So we have turned the big economy around. It is the soundest it's been in a generation.

Nothing reflects that more than what happens to homeownership. In the 12 years before I took office, believe it or not, the rate of homeownership in America had actually gone down significantly, partly because of the enormous pressure on interest rates and home mortgage rates aggravated by our massive debt. We have been determined to give the American people more chances to live out their dreams. The deficit cut helped drive interest rates down and the homeownership strategy that Secretary Cisneros devised in partnership with the homebuilding interests around our country was designed to broaden and deepen the ranks of homeowners.

Among other things, one of the things that we did that I'm proudest of is that we have cut \$1,000 off the average closing costs for the average first-time homebuyers, young couples trying to get into their homes for the first time. It's made a real difference.

Today we know we've got almost 4 million new homeowners in the last 3½ years. We've got 8 million homeowners who have refinanced their mortgages because of lower interest rates. And the Department of Commerce reported that homeownership is at its highest rate in 15 years. And over the past 2 years it grew at its fastest rate in 30 years. This strategy is working for the benefit of ordinary Americans, and we need to keep on the path we're on. We need to keep working for this.

Now, we certainly have more to do. We need to balance the budget, but do it in the right way. We don't have to destroy our commitment to the environment or to education, or wreck the Medicaid program or create a two-tiered system of Medicare that's unfair to the oldest, the poorest, and the sickest elderly Americans. We don't have to do that. But we do have to balance the budget.

We ought to pass the Kassebaum-Kennedy bill to basically guarantee what you've tried to do here: You don't lose your health insurance if you have to change jobs or if someone in your family gets sick.

The minimum wage bill that Mayor Webb mentioned has been passed by both Houses of Congress, but they haven't both passed the same bill and sent it to me. So it's not a done deal yet. But you should know that that bill is important to me for two reasons, not just one. In addition to the minimum wage, the bill also increases incentives to small businesses to invest in their business, because that's where most new jobs are being created, and passes most of the retirement reforms I asked for to make it easier for people in small businesses or self-employed people to take out and maintain retirement even when the business is down or when they have to change jobs.

We have to make available a secure retirement not just for those of us who are fortunate to work for bigger businesses or for government, but for people who work in small business as well. So that bill needs to pass for the minimum wage and the retirement reforms and the investment incentives for small businesses. These things need to be done and done now.

But I have to tell you, of all the opportunity initiatives we could take—and I'm betraying my long partnership with your Governor now—the most important thing we could do is to increase the quality and the availability of education to all Americans. For as long as we've been around, educational opportunity has been an advantage to most people. After World War II, the GI bill literally helped us to build the biggest middle class in the history of the world. But today—today—education is critical to the ability of families to keep up, much less to move ahead.

Now, we've made a lot of proposals, but I just want to emphasize two today. First of all, it is imperative that we give the same standard of educational opportunity to people in isolated rural areas and inner city poor schools that others have. And one of the ways to do that is to connect every classroom in the country to the information superhighway by the year 2000 and train the teachers to use it, so that all that information will be available to all of our children.

The other thing I believe we have to do is to continue to break down the barriers to people going to college and staying there until they get an education. I believe strongly that one of the most important things our administration has done is to change the college loan system so that people can borrow money at lower costs with less hassle and then pay it back as a per-

centage of their income. So there is never an incentive not to borrow money to go to college because you can limit your annual repayment rates.

But I think we should do more. I have recommended that we give a deduction of up to \$10,000 a year for the cost of college tuition for people without regard to their age. And I believe we should make universal—universal—the availability of at least 2 years of community college to every American, which means a tax credit of \$1,500 a year for 2 years.

Now, if we were to put in place that structure of opportunity, it would be easier for people to succeed at home and at work and for us to realize our vision of an America with the American dream alive, coming together instead of being divided, strong and self-confident enough to lead the world toward peace and freedom.

The other thing we have to do, however, is to put in place a system in which we get more responsibility from all Americans. We have to continue to work to take our streets back from guns and gangs and drugs and violence. We can never eliminate crime and violence altogether. And sometimes people ask me—they say, well, the crime rate has come down for 4 years in a row. And I say, that's very good, but it's still too high. I'm glad it's down 4 years in a row, but it's still too high. And I'm worried about the fact that violence, random violence among young people between the ages of 12 and 17, continues to go up. Cocaine use is down by about a third, but random drug use among people between the ages of 12 and 17 has been going up since 1991, so that concerns me.

And my test will be—you ought to figure out what your test would be. I guess your test would be when you feel safe walking on your streets in your neighborhood. But my test will be, is when we can all go home at night and turn on the evening news, and if the lead story is a crime story, we are shocked instead of numbed by it; we're actually surprised because we've reached a point in our country where it is the exception, not the rule. And I'm here to tell you we can make violent crime the exception, not the rule, in America again if we do the right things. And I am determined to do it.

Our anticrime strategy: Put 100,000 police on the streets in community policing. Increase neighborhood watch patrols; involve neighbors

in their own efforts. Do more things to help people deal with the problems that juveniles have. Support community curfews. Support stronger truancy laws. Support summer jobs and activities and drug education and prevention programs as well as punishment programs. Support positive things for young people to keep them out of trouble in the first place. Ban the assault weapons that we banned, and enforce the Brady bill. And follow a comprehensive strategy against crime that is tough on crime but tries to prevent young people from becoming criminals.

That is our strategy. And it is working. The crime rate has come down for 4 years in a row. We had the awfulest hullabaloo you ever heard when we passed the assault weapons ban and the Brady bill. And to hear the folks on the other side tell it, we had brought an end to an American way of life—never be another hunting season in Colorado or Arkansas. [Laughter] They had people so lathered up in the election 2 years ago you couldn't talk to them. But you know what? All those same folks got it figured out now because they've had two more hunting seasons and nobody lost their rifle. But 60,000 felons, fugitives, and stalkers could not buy a handgun because of the Brady bill. It was the right thing to do.

The other day we had an announcement in Washington with the Vice President and members of the cellular telephone association in which they committed 50,000 telephones—just the first installment—programmed to call the local police department, fire department, and hospital, to give to neighborhood watches. We now have 20,000 neighborhood watch associations in America. We have millions of people in it. I challenged another million Americans to join.

We have to do our part, too, as citizens. But I'm telling you, we do not have to live with intolerable crime levels. We do not have to live with juvenile crime rates going up. We have to find ways to be very tough with people who do terrible things, but we also got to give these kids something to say yes to. We can't let them raise themselves and then wonder why they turn out to be in trouble.

Now, it is in that context I want you to see the welfare reform debate, because welfare reform is about responsibility, all right, but it's also about opportunity. What do you want from all these poor folks that are on welfare? What

do you want from them? They all have kids. Ask yourselves, what do you want? You want them to have kids that turn out to be the mayor of Denver, right? Isn't that what you want? This is what I ask Congress to think about when they think about welfare reform. We want those families to be able to do what we want middle class families to do and they're struggling to do as well: succeed at home and at work. That's what we want.

Now, it's true that I have vetoed two previous bills that had the label "welfare reform" on it because I didn't think they were welfare reform. And it wasn't because they were too tough on work; it was because they were too tough on kids. And if you don't succeed at home, whether you're poor or rich or somewhere in the middle, then your worklife won't compensate for it in terms of the impact on your own family and on society at large. But if you don't succeed at work, then it's very difficult to build a network of successful homes.

That's why this is so hard. So we decided we would take a different tack while trying to work with Congress, and that I would use the power given to the President under the 1988 welfare reform law to just waive Federal rules and regulations for States that wanted to find new ways to move people from welfare to work in a way that helped them raise their children. Colorado was one of 40 of the 50 States to get welfare reform experiment waivers. There have been a total of 67 of these issued now, with more to come.

Now, the results have been pretty impressive. Already—this is something hardly anybody in America knows—but three-quarters of the welfare families in America today are under new rules requiring them to make extra efforts to move from welfare to work. And the results have been significant. The New York Times said that we had effected a quiet revolution in welfare. Sometimes I wish it weren't so quiet. I wish more people knew about it. But the fact is there are 1.3 million fewer people on the welfare rolls today than there were the day I took the oath of office and about a million fewer on the food stamp rolls. In Colorado, the rate has dropped by 18 percent in 3 years. That's astonishing, 18 percent in 3 years.

Now, some of that is due to the improving economy, but that's a good argument for good economic policy. But some of it is due to our learning what it takes to move people trapped

in dependency to independence and interdependence with the rest of us so they can raise their children and succeed in the workplace.

I do believe we need to finish the job. We can do some things with waivers. I'll give you some other examples. Oregon, Missouri, and most recently Wisconsin have asked for permission to take the welfare check—this is quite interesting—because they know that there's not enough money to just have the Government pay for jobs for people who can't get jobs in the private sector, so they've asked for permission to take the welfare check and actually give it to private employers as a wage supplement for 8 or 9 months to encourage people to hire folks at a decent wage and train them. And they figure, and I think they're right, that even if when the supplement ends, somehow the employers can't afford to keep folks on the payroll, at least they will have had 9 months of work experience, something on their resume, learning how to succeed in the workplace. And a lot of people will be kept full time. I think that's the kind of idea we want.

And Wisconsin has proposed to go further and to give these folks continuing health care and child care support and actually to extend child care and health care coverage to low-wage workers who have not been on welfare, to keep them from falling into welfare. Now, these are good ideas.

In return for that, the sort of hammer they want, the tough thing they want, is to require people to enroll and to be available for jobs from the day they sign up for welfare, not a year or two later. I think that's fine, if you're going to give somebody a job and health care and child care. What more can you ask?

But these are the kinds of things we can do with the waiver system. But it's not enough. We would be better off if we could pass a welfare reform bill in Congress. And I want to explain why. Number one, it would be good to end this waiver process and simply set up a framework to the States and say, here's your money; do these things, and you figure out how to do them. Don't come to us for permission. You know more about it than we do. Figure out how to do them. But you ought to require strict time limits; you ought to require work; you ought to provide child support; and you ought to enforce the child support laws of your

State better. Now, that's what I think the framework would do.

We are very close to this agreement on these basic elements. And we shouldn't let the opportunity slip from our grasp. But neither should we pass a bill that says welfare reform at the top but really winds up still being very tough on children, including children from already working families.

So what I'm doing now is working very hard with the Congress. I hope and expect to sign legislation that does move people from welfare to work and does support instead of undermine the raising of our children.

This should not be a party issue. All Americans ought to want this system changed. And I hope very much that Congress will pass a bipartisan bill that meets those standards. If it does, I think it would have almost unanimous support from the American people. And I believe it can be done before Congress leaves for town for its vacation in August.

So I want you to join me in saying to the Members of Congress, whether you're a Democrat or Republican, get together, don't be hard on kids, be tough for work, be good for the kids. Let's try to help all families succeed at home and at work. We've got enough experiments. We've moved enough people off welfare. We know what works. Let's pass this bill and get on with it and do it now. That's what we need to do.

I want to mention one thing that's very important that's often not talked about in welfare, although the mayor and the Governor talked about it, and that's child support enforcement. There's no area where we need more personal responsibility than child support. The best provisions of the welfare bill moving through Congress are those that relate to child support because they would give us greater capacity to collect child support across State lines. About—well, slightly more than a third of all the child support cases where child support is delinquent in America today are cases that cross State lines. That's one of the main reasons we need this national legislation.

This is a big hidden social crisis in America today. If every person in this country paid the child support they're legally obligated to pay and that they can pay, we could move 800,000 women and children off the welfare rolls today. That's what a problem it is.

So let me just echo what the mayor and the Governor said. Governments can do a lot of things, but they don't raise children; people raise children. And if parents don't do it, very often the kids are left out there on the streets raising themselves with absolutely horrible consequences.

And there are a lot of single-parent families in this country today where the single parent's doing a fine job. And since I lived in one for a time in my life, I'm proud to say that I know that can happen. I also know that no child gets here with one parent alone. And no one should be able to escape responsibility for bringing a child into the world. That is the first and most important responsibility. We cannot talk about how we need more responsibility from all of our citizens when we've got a child support collection system that is a national scandal and people believe they can bring kids in the world and turn around and walk off from them and never lift a finger to help them make their way through life. That is wrong, and we have to change that.

And we can change it in the beginning by simply collecting the child support that is owed, that is payable, that people can pay that they don't pay. There's a lot more work we need to do with young parents, principally young fathers, by helping them understand what their responsibilities are and then structuring opportunities for them to fulfill it. But we can just begin by collecting the child support.

You cannot imagine how many women and children are thrown into poverty simply because the responsible parent, usually the father, walks away and leaves them without any money and won't help. This puts mothers who are trying to raise their kids under terrible pressure. A lot of women out there working two jobs, working at night, worried sick about their kids, can't afford the child support—I mean, excuse me, can't afford the child care. All of the other problems working families face are aggravated many times over by families that have a single parent raising the kids with no help from child support, every other one.

And if you're in a position where you've had these problems, trying to raise your child and work and do all these things, you know how much worse it is if child support is owed and not paid. This is a moral outrage and a social disaster. It is simply—and it's wrong when people say, well, the taxpayers will pick up the

bill. Well, the taxpayers may pick up the bill to some extent, but it's rarely enough. And secondly, it is a cold, inadequate substitute for having a parent do the right thing.

So let me tell you, this legislation would help us to make it easier to collect child support across national lines. It would require every State in the country to follow Colorado's lead in the revocation of a driver's license. It would get us employers' help when people change jobs and move across State lines because there would be an employer registry that we could refer to for the collection of child support that's due across State lines. That's why this legislation is needed.

There are a lot of things that can be done now. We're now tracking down deadbeat parents so that they can't skip out by crossing the State line. We're requiring States to establish programs at hospitals to find out the identity of fathers at the time a baby is born. Two hundred thousand fathers have been identified through this program. Earlier this year I took action to require mothers to identify the fathers or risk losing their welfare benefits.

I signed an Executive order to make sure every employee of the Federal Government pays his or her child support. We ought to be setting a good example in the Federal Government before we preach to others to do the same. We are now a model employer in that regard.

We've been working with States to do more. And one of the reasons I wanted to make this statement here today is that Colorado has one of the finest programs in the country to find deadbeat parents and make them pay. I want every State to do as well. Together, we can all do better.

Now, all these efforts are making a difference. Compared to 4 years ago, child support collections are up 40 percent, from \$8 billion a year to \$11 billion a year. That's the good news. Paternity identification is up 40 percent. That's the good news. The bad news is we could double that increase again and still be under what is strictly legally owed. We've got to keep going on this issue.

I'm pleased to announce today that the Postal Service is going to work with States to post wanted lists of parents who owe support. I challenge every State to develop such a list if they don't have one already. That may seem cruel to you, but think of it this way: Keep in mind, if there's an order outstanding, a judge has made

a determination that the payment can be made, that is, that the parent can actually physically afford to make the payment. Now, that may seem cruel to you, but people take it as routine to walk in a post office and see somebody who robs a bank or a 7-Eleven. As bad as that is, if nobody's hurt it's not as bad as robbing our children of their future. That's the biggest robbery of all.

I've also directed the Justice Department to work with States to strengthen their own penalties and prosecutions for those who don't pay child support. I want the prosecutors to be able to track down these parents and tell the courts to make them pay and if necessary, even to be able to send them to jail if they refuse.

The third thing we're doing is to harness the potential of the Internet. This is amazing; 19 States—19 States—have websites whereby just literally clicking with your mouse, families can find out how to collect and look for the most wanted deadbeat parents. Today, the State of Colorado is announcing that it will start a web page. This page will be connected like the others are to the computer site that's run by the National Government.

There's a lot of things the Internet can be used for, and they're not all good. This is a good thing we can use technology for, to instantaneously get this information out all across America and make it available to anybody who can access a computer.

And finally, let me say I want to renew my challenge to every State to follow the lead of Colorado with the driver's license revocation. The statute we're working for, if we get welfare reform, will require it anyway, but the States ought to do it because it's right.

Now, we are saying by these strong actions and our efforts to pass welfare reform, you have to behave responsibly. And if you owe child support, you better pay it. If you deliberately refuse to pay it, you can find your face posted in the post office. We'll track you down with computers. We'll track you down with law enforcement. We'll find you through the Internet, not because anybody has a particular interest in humiliating someone but because we have got to find a way if we want to go into the 21st century as a great nation to succeed at work and at home. And it has to begin with parents doing their part. The Government can never substitute for that.

The last thing I'd like to say about this whole thing is that, as you know, there are limits to how much all these enforcement mechanisms can do. We need to find a way to move into the modern world taking maximum advantage of all the changes that our age offers and still getting back to the basic sense of right and wrong that we know about our obligations to our children and to our future.

In the 1830's when Alexis de Tocqueville came here, he said, "America is great because America is good. If America ever stops being good, she will no longer be great." That is still true.

When I visited our Olympians with Hillary a couple of days ago and we met young people from other countries, all they wanted to talk to me about was what they thought about America—an Irish athlete thanking me for our efforts to end the violence in Northern Ireland; a Croatian athlete thanking me for Secretary Brown's trade mission that ended so tragically just because he and these business people were trying to help those folks put their lives back together and thanking me that Secretary Kantor had finished the mission; a Palestinian athlete saying that his people were an old people, but they never had an Olympic team until they made peace with Israel, and saying that a lot of them wanted to keep that peace and keep it going.

These are things that we represent to other people, things that are good, things that make people whole, things that enable people to live out their dreams. And somehow with all this excitement of the modern world and all these personal choices and all these personal challenges, we have to find a way to remember that in the end what makes us great is living out our dreams in a way that builds strong families, strong neighborhoods, strong communities, and a strong country.

And if we could just keep in mind every day that the choices we make as citizens and as workers and as parents will affect what this country looks like when our children are our age, I think we'd make the right decisions. And America's best days, therefore, are still before us.

Thank you very much, and God bless you.

NOTE: The President spoke at 9:35 a.m. in Buell Theater at the Denver Center for the Performing Arts. In his remarks, he referred to Mayor Wellington E. Webb of Denver and Gov. Roy Romer

of Colorado. He also referred to his memorandums of June 18 and July 21 on child support

enforcement. A portion of these remarks could not be verified because the tape was incomplete.

Remarks in Monrovia, California July 22, 1996

Thank you very much. Thank you. Thank you so much. I have had a wonderful time, and I wish I could just quit now—[laughter]—because all the people who have spoken have said what I came to highlight for America. I thank Nora Graham for leading the Pledge of Allegiance; your principal, Lois Wurmbrand; and your superintendent, Louise Taylor; Chief Santoro, thank you. Yolanda Gallardo, you're a good speaker; you ought to run for office some time. [Applause] Thank you. I thank Lieutenant Governor Gray Davis and the L.A. district attorney, Gil Garcetti, for being here with me, and the other law enforcement officials, Chief Williams and other chiefs from around the area and law enforcement officers and the State Assembly members and the others who have come here. And Mr. Mayor, I want to say a special word of thanks to you and the City Council of Monrovia for making us feel so welcome, and thank you for bringing your mother today; that was a good thing to do. Thank you very much.

I want you to know why I wanted to come to this community today. I spend an enormous amount of time as President trying to make our country ready to move into the 21st century. That's why I ran for the job. I had this simple but rather dramatic vision that we were drifting divided into the next century when we ought to be charging united into the next century and that we really ought to be, in 4 years as we begin this new century and this millennium, a country, first, where the American dream is alive for everybody who is willing to work for it; second, where we have a sense of national community rooted in mutual respect for each other across all the incredible diversity that makes up America; and finally, that we continue to be the strongest force in the world for peace and freedom and security and prosperity.

And if that happens I believe that our children will live in the greatest age of possibility in human history. The children that are in this

school system now, 10 years from now they'll be doing jobs that haven't even been invented yet. And if we do our jobs they'll be doing that in a peaceful world that has people who are more united, stronger families and neighborhoods and communities, States in our Nation. And we'll be working with other countries around the world to fight our common enemies of this new age, including terrorism and drug running and the proliferation of dangerous weapons and the wars based on racial and ethnic and religious hatred.

I believe that the stakes could hardly be higher. But meeting them begins at home. And that's why I wanted to come here. There are things that we have to do in Washington. We have to provide for the national defense and to meet the security challenges of the new era. We have to try to create a framework within which the American people can grow their own economy. Otherwise, a lot of what we do is trying to set rules that enable people to make the most of their own lives, whether it's the Family and Medical Leave Act that tries to help people succeed at home and at work by saying you don't lose your job if you have to take a little time off when there's a baby born or a sick parent, or the new meat standards for testing that we propose to stop children from getting the *E. coli* virus in meat. We try to set rules within which people can work together, in which our free market can work, in which people's creativity can work, in which local communities can solve their own problems.

I worked very hard on the economy and on the security issues. But I've also, perhaps because I was Governor of a small State for 12 years, worked very hard to put the Federal Government on the side of people and communities who are struggling to make the most of their own lives and meet their challenges and protect their values and protect their children. We have proposed to help and support communities that wanted to do a number of things that we